



CAPITOL COMMISSION

How Can Someone in Politics Keep Their Way Pure?

PSALM 119:9

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Tim Pauley / PO Box 58403, Charleston, WV 25358 / 304.767.8430 / tim.pauley@capitolcom.org

Life and work in the capitol is challenging. It can be difficult to consistently live in a way that is pleasing to God in the midst of the struggles that are inherent to serving in politics and leadership. Our study deals with a verse that teaches us how we can keep our way pure in the face of tough circumstances and intense temptations:

How can a young man keep his way pure?

By keeping it according to Your word.

Ps. 119:9

Most of us reading these notes do not fall under the description “young man”. Yet this verse is very practical for each of us in our particular life situation. There are temptations and sins that are particularly common to “young men”. Thomas Manton shared how young men need the guidance of the Bible due to “being inclined to liberty and carnal pleasures, and apt to be led aside from the right way by the motions of the flesh; being headstrong in their passions and self-willed.” Manton vividly describes how “unbroken colts need the stronger bits”.¹ There are temptations and sins that are particularly common to politics and government service. There can be a temptation to pride. In the heat of campaigns or debates it is easy to become angry and hold grudges. Extended time away from family and community can lead to the enticement of moral failure. The barrage of dinners and receptions might tempt one to drink more than they should. We can point to those who have given in to the temptation to use their position of influence for personal gain. Indeed, there are many temptations especially prevalent in life in the political realm. So I do not believe it is a stretch in the application of this verse to ask, “How can someone in politics keep their way pure?” Before we consider the answer to this important question, let us again read the next section of Psalm 119:

¹²¹ *I have done justice and righteousness;
Do not leave me to my oppressors.*

¹²² *Be surety for Your servant for good;
Do not let the arrogant oppress me.*

¹²³ *My eyes fail with longing for Your salvation
And for Your righteous word.*

¹²⁴ *Deal with Your servant according to Your
lovingkindness And teach me Your statutes.*

¹²⁵ *I am Your servant; give me understanding,
That I may know Your testimonies.*

¹²⁶ *It is time for the LORD to act,
For they have broken Your law.*

¹²⁷ *Therefore I love Your commandments
Above gold, yes, above fine gold.*

¹²⁸ *Therefore I esteem right all Your precepts concerning
everything, I hate every false way.*

HOW DO WE KEEP OUR WAY PURE?

One of the reasons we treasure God’s Word is how He uses it to accomplish His work in our lives. A key part of that work is to make us “pure” or “clean”. This is simply descriptive language for being right with God, for having our sins forgiven, and for living in a way that pleases Him. How can we do this? How can we have our sins forgiven and then consistently keep our way pure in God’s sight? We find a simple answer: **by keeping our way according to God’s Word.** We treasure God’s Word. We read it, study it, and strive to understand it. We learn of God’s character and of His expectations for our lives. We seek to know the principles found in Scripture and live our lives accordingly. Only in so doing can we live a life that is pure before the Lord. When we consider how the Bible makes our way pure, we find there are actually three different aspects of being “pure” or “clean” from sin.

FINDING FORGIVENESS OF SINS

In many of our studies we have talked about what it means to be right with God. Our Holy God demands absolute perfection, and each and every one of us have fallen far short of His holiness and glory (Rom. 3:23). This sin has left us “dirty” and “defiled” before Him. In order to be right with Him, this sin must be dealt with, forgiven, or in the words of our verse made pure or

BIBLE STUDIES

INTERIM BIBLE STUDY

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12 * 8:00 A.M & 12:00 NOON * SENATE PRESIDENT’S CONFERENCE ROOM (M219) * BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROVIDED

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cleansed. This can only be accomplished through the work of Christ on the cross. David describes this in a Psalm dealing with his own terrible sin: **“Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”** (Psalm. 51:7)² Paul described this as he reminded believers in the church at Corinth of their wicked idolatrous and immoral past:

Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:11

Paul goes on in another letter to Corinth to give a tremendous statement about how this cleansing from sin takes place:

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

If we want to be pure and have a right relationship with God, we must do so according to His Word. There we find it is only through repentance and faith in Christ that we have our sins cleansed so that we can have a right relationship with Him.³

DEALING WITH ONGOING SIN

While a believer stands before God forgiven, and cleansed from their sin, it is a fact of life that we must still deal with sin on an ongoing basis. John writes very pointedly how a believer must deal with the ongoing sin with which we struggle every day:

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:8-10

Skeptics and critics often complain that Christians are hypocrites. Some even reject Christianity using this as an excuse. However any follower of Christ who is honest and understands scripture will admit we struggle with sin each

and every day. We can look back to the cross and know our sin is forgiven and Christ's goodness has been credited to our account. But we will seek to “make things right” in our walk with God as we confess those sins to Him. Here, God's Word shows us the way to stay pure on a daily basis.

GROWING IN PURITY AND HOLINESS

Our verse asks, **“How can a young man *keep* his way pure?”** This seems to point to one who has had their sins forgiven through repentance and faith; and is seeking to deal consistently with ongoing sin. How can that person continue on a path of purity and personal holiness, growing in Christ likeness on a daily basis? We do so by seeking to live according to God's Word. This means growing in knowledge of the Bible and striving to apply it to the struggles and temptations of daily life. As we consider how one in politics might keep their way pure, we would do well to spend time considering how the Scriptures might apply to life in the statehouse.⁴

CONCLUSION

How can someone in politics keep their way pure?

- **HAVE YOU FOUND FORGIVENESS AND CLEANSING OF SIN THROUGH REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN CHRIST?**
- **ARE YOU SEEKING TO DEAL WITH THE ONGOING SIN IN YOUR LIFE, ESPECIALLY THOSE THINGS WHICH MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING IN LIFE HERE IN THE CAPITOL?**
- **ARE YOU GROWING IN YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN APPLYING THE BIBLE TO YOUR DAILY LIFE? THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO BE CERTAIN YOU WILL “KEEP YOUR WAY PURE”.**

¹ Manton, Thomas. Sermons Upon Psalm 119. *Sermon 10*. (Vol. 6, pg 82)

² “Hyssop” referred to is a plant used in the sacrifices which pointed ahead to the death of Christ on the cross.

³ This aspect of purity or cleansing is called “Justification” and deals with our position with God

⁴ This aspect of purity is called “Sanctification” and deals with our daily life in becoming more like Christ